

Exploring Style

Name: _____

Date: _____

Style can be defined as any of the characteristic ways that an author uses language.

WHAT IS STYLE?

Every author uses the elements of style in individual ways to achieve certain effects. Like an individual fingerprint, an author's style identifies his or her writing as unique. It also has specific effects on the reader.

RECOGNIZING THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE

Many different elements go into what makes up an author's "style":

- *Word choice (also called "diction")*: Does the author use words drawn from everyday language and slang, or from a higher vocabulary level?
- *Length and complexity of sentences*: Are story sentences short and choppy, or long and complex?
- *Punctuation*: Does the author use punctuation in any distinctive ways that differ from normal usage?
- *Use of imagery and symbols*: Does the author make use of special images or symbols to tell the story?
- *Sound and rhythm*: Does the author choose or arrange words for the way they sound? How does the story sound when you read it aloud?

The effects of style choices The elements of an author's style have many effects on how readers respond to his or her story.

- *Mood*: How do the elements listed above contribute to the story's mood? For example, is the overall feeling of the story light and easy, or dark and brooding?
- *Tone*: How do the elements listed above affect the author's tone? Is the overall tone warm and inviting, or distant and reserved?

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILE YOU ARE READING A SHORT STORY:

1. What elements of the author's style are most noticeable? How does the story's style compare with the style of stories by other authors you have read?
2. How do the elements of the story's style specifically affect how you respond to the story?